Interview with [P3]

P = Participant at case study institution

The following conventions are used in transcription of spoken interviews:

[replacement information in square brackets]

[redacted information in grey in square brackets]

[?] = unintelligible missing word(s); immediately following word = unclear[?]

[#] = redacted numerical information

CAPITALS to signify emphasis in speaking

((Extraneous information in double brackets))

Researcher:

It looks like the transcription’s working. So yeah. Should we just dive into it? ((laughing))

[P3]

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Researcher:

Yeah. So um in the information we sent you, we I mean explained a little bit about the project. So we're interested in looking at how English is being increasingly used in academic programs in Europe, where English isn't say the societal language as such. And we started with looking at the Netherlands because they had been early implementers of programmes. And I'm looking at Austria and some other people are probably going to look at Italy and and Spain. We're hoping to expand our territory ((laughing)) so to speak. And we're looking at it also from the point of view of educational reform. So for example, in the case of Austria um the University Act 2002, it seems to be quite important in terms of umm looking at it. So if if some of my questions may be kind of related to steering from a distance or something like that in relation to the BMBWF or the NATIONAL development plans or UNIVERSITY development plans and if you have NO interest or no insights to share on this, so that's fine. Just say pass ((laughing)).

[P3]:

OK. OK.

Researcher:

You don't need to answer the questions. So but we contacted you basically because of your experience and expertise in [administrative area] and and um, so I was wondering could you just, let's start by warming up a bit, could you tell me something about your role? So I mean, I have a very BASIC understanding from the internet that you-

[P3]:

Yeah. I am since [#] years working for the [case study university] in the [unit name], my background is I was before at the, I studied [subject area]. I was at the uh, uh [name of institution] umm and since [#] years I'm at the [unit name], and the subunit is the [subunit name].

[Redacted information on role.] It was a big FUNDING scheme of the [case study university].

Researcher:

Sorry, what was that called again? I didn't catch it.

[P3]:

[name of scheme]

Researcher:

[name of scheme], ah okay.

[P3]:

Yeah, it was a big [type of scheme] of the [case study university]. It was open for all disciplines, for predocs so they could get it, three years predoc contract.

Researcher:

Ah, OK.

[P3]:

And this was a HUGE uh, a LONG selection process, half a year, and we had uh between [#] and [#] candidates and we got [#] positions per year. [Redacted information on role.]

Researcher:

OK, so it's not an ongoing scheme then, it's it's it's finished now.

[P3]:

It's not anymore. Not anymore.

Researcher:

Okay.

[P3]:

[#] years or [#] years.

Researcher:

OK, that's quite a long time then. Sorry, I didn't, I didn't catch when you said your background, just out of interest, personal interest, you said, did you say your background, it was in [subject area]. Sorry, I didn't catch the-

[P3]:

[subject area], [subject area].

Researcher:

OK, Ohh I see. Sorry. Sorry ((laughing)). I think it's the the mask as well.

[P3]:

Yeah, sorry, sorry. But we are we are in more more people in the office that's that [?].

Researcher:

Yeah. Yeah, sorry, is is it OK to talk to me here?

[P3]:

Yes, fine, it's fine.

Researcher:

It's fine, okay, great. Yeah [redacted identifying information].

[P3]:

((nodding)) Yep.

Researcher:

Yeah [redacted identifying information], if you want to make a say, a cotutelle arrangement with a university that's on our list of rankings?

[P3]:

Hm-hm ((nodding))

Researcher:

So it's wondering how, how important is the RANKING aspect in terms of giving provision?

[P3]:

Uh, cotutelle in the moment our [name in governance role] wants to approve them individually, so we have we

have THREE requirements, or one of the three has to fit. Yes. So the first would be if it's in the framework of an ITM[?] project, for example. There they there they have to they have to be joint degrees within this in this scheme. And this is where another [?] project where we had in the in the in the proposal you had uh, cotutelle agreements or joint degrees? Uh, the second would be if it's part of a funding or the person is already funded. So if someone comes from [university in France], is funded there, wants to make for some reason a cotutelle with with [case study university]. And the third reason would be if really someone approaches us individually, has no funding, etcetera, etcetera, but the cooporation with this university, or this specific department would have an add-on for the [case study university]. Then we try to, for example, [university in the Netherlands] is much higher ranked than [case study university] than JUST as an example. We would be happy to start yeah.

Researcher:

Yeah. And do you also have arrangements with other universities in Austria, for example, or Germany?

[P3]:

No.

Researcher:

No.

[P3]:

There is just just, not possible within Austria.

Researcher:

Why is that? Is it to do with the fun-

[P3]:

That's [?] from the law. It's from the law.

Researcher:

Oh really?

[P3]:

Yeah, you have to be. It has to be abroad.

Researcher:

So you you couldn't have a PhD student with one advisor at the [case study university] and one advisor at another university in Austria?

[P3]:

That's possible if if it's not a cotutelle, then it's no problem. If it's, if it's a cotutelle it's really uh, what you you said is a is a co-supervision. Yeah. There is the possibility of a co-supervision internationally, nationally and a cotutelle means that you are enrolled at both universities. You have to fulfill the the, the, the, the, the curricula and all the requirements of both universities. You have to have a supervisor there and here.

Researcher:

Yep.

[P3]:

You have to spend the same amount of time with almost the same amount of time there and here.

Researcher:

Uh-huh.

[P3]:

But you just write one thesis and you just have to have have to make one defense.

Researcher:

I see. OK. So-

[P3]:

And you have two degrees and you can, but you can't just at the same time, you can just use one. So if you are for example in you you, let's stick with [city in France] and [city of case study university], you got the title from the [name of university] in France. You may use the French one. If you go to Germany, you may use the Austrian one.

Researcher:

All right. OK.

[P3]:

But I mean it's, you can use BOTH, but not at the same time.

Researcher:

Yeah. OK, so this this by definition a cotutelle is international then, basically within within the EU,

is it or?

[P3]:

Yeah, it is TOTALLY international, it's it it it is, uh, different it it depends on the, on the, on the, on the, on the doctorate regulations in these countries. We have Australia, US we don't have, but the main reason there is money and that they have MOSTLY six years PhD programs and ours are THREE years. So the plan is three years and so.

Researcher:

Six years. That's a long time. ((laughing)) That's a long time, isn't it?

[P3]:

Yeah. UK, I don't know they that our our experience with UK is that THEY are not interested.

Researcher:

Really.

[P3]:

So if we have no functioning one with the UK so far.

Researcher:

OK.

[P3]:

Maybe this changes now, maybe this changes now, but umm within uh, we have no open, we have no

running cotutelle there.

Researcher:

OK, so in in your experience, umm, I don't know how relevant it is at the application stage, but are there cotutelles then always in in the English language the the applications?

[P3]:

Ah.

Researcher:

Also the PhD programmes that the students do and the theses that they write? Are you aware of

this or is this not-

[P3]:

For the cotutelles the cotutelles, I would say it's half-half so.

Researcher:

So half German as well.

[P3]:

Half German as well. Yeah. Yeah. So people out, so it it depends.

Researcher:

Right, right.

[P3]:

The outgoing people. Yeah, the cotutelle are mainly German speaking, the incoming mainly

English speaking. So if someone someone from uh Portugal approaches me, he writes in English.

Researcher:

Right, right.

[P3]:

In Germany, we have a lot so it maybe, I would have would have to to check my emails which but um it's maybe a slight overlap German but this because the internationals from Germany speak German.

Researcher:

Right, right.

[P3]:

Otherwise it would be half-half or even, yeah.

Researcher:

By by half, sorry by half-half, you mean the number of applicants, not the half in another place and half

here kind of thing.

[P3]:

No, half of the of the applicants, yes.

Researcher:

Of the applicants,yeah.

[P3]:

And just just for to to put it in a big bigger picture, the internationals at the [case study university] in the doctorate are around [#% range].

Researcher:

Oh OK. So that's quite HIGH.

[P3]:

Yeah, but again, there's Germany ((laughing)).

Researcher:

Yeah. Oh, I see. Of course ((laughing)).

[P3]:

For the English speaking, it's a little bit lower, but in sum also it also differs with the discipline. For example, in, in [discipline area] there around [#]% international.

Researcher:

[Discipline area] [#]% right. And and you're not including Germany in the international or you ARE, sorry?

[P3]

Yes, they're included, they're included.

Researcher:

Oh they're included. Would there be a lot of Germans in [discipline area] then, it's quite popular?

[P3]:

Uh, I I I would have to to to to look with the with the but here I have, I can send you later on statistics if you want from, I got yesterday this brochure ((holds up International Report)).

Researcher:

All right, I I I've got that on, I downloaded that. Yeah. Is it in there for also for doct-, yeah.

[P3]:

There is, from page, uh, [#], it's it's doctorate so.

Researcher:

Oh, I see. OK, I'll have another look. Sorry I hadn't consulted that again. I had had a quick look through it.

[P3]:

But this was the the data I had just I got.

Researcher:

Yeah. Um I I heard that the doctoral programs have become more restrictive, so something to do with the change in the legal framework in the University Act. I I'm not sure I um it said something.

[P3]

Two two main changes in the last few years. In summer 2018, we got the new admission process so from this point on, um, you couldn't just enroll, before you could just enroll if you had the academics background. So if you had a master degree in a similar field, you could just enroll and you were accepted most mostly, yeah, but THEN you have got new rules from summer 2018 that you need that will be prove more detail, you have to upload additional documents, there's a short proposal a motivation letter, academic CV and the the most important part, uh, uh, a letter from a or a document from a supervisor that he's willing to supervise you so that you have supervisor when you apply for admission. And that drops, that dropped the numbers a lot. So when we had in in in some in uh, uh, 2017, we had around [#]. And 2018 was around [# less than half]. And now we are new students per year and now we are at [lower #]. So we reduced the number but which what grows the quality for the for the for the students in some way.

Researcher:

Right. So I mean, is it too early to tell if that means that the rate of COMPLETION is is rising because you've got higher quality candidates?

[P3]:

That yeah that this this effect should be visible in the next years since it was where we have four years average. So now we have the, the, the, the completion we have like around [#] NEW PhDs per year and [#] completing. That's the, but this is really rough, rough rough numbers.

Researcher:

Right, right.

[P3]:

Just to give you ((waves hands)).

Researcher:

And and have you noticed then that you've had an increase in, that you've had an increase in applications for

cotutelles or for high higher or for funding because the quality of the candidates has gone up, or is it roughly the same or?

[P3]:

We have now a peak with cotutelles, the last few months, it's really it's really a lot.

Researcher:

Really, yeah.

[P3]:

Uh, so for example, [redacted identifying information], I don't know if it's post- or that the pandemic situation is a different one that you can travel more again and, but I think another reason is that that I was talking about the 2nd big change, we implemented doctoral schools.

Researcher:

Right.

[P3]:

From summer [year], we've got now [#] doctoral schools.

Researcher:

Yep.

[P3]:

Uh, in different topics and there uh there also uh have to have the the the one of their how to say umm looking for the German word um the English word.

Researcher:

I mean, you can you can throw out some German because I I know some. So if it helps.

[P3]:

Uh they should establish, they should establish international cooperation and a cotutelle agreement is a a way to establish international cooperation on the department level. And so uh, we have really good departments in some fields, for example, in [subject area] in [case study university], it's top [#] in the world, for example, and they cooperate a lot and there also the numbers of cotutelles are higher because people are interested to go, come here and um. But I think it's it's partly rising because of mobilities back and and the doctoral schools. That's my personal personal impression.

Researcher:

Yeah. Yeah. Could you, I mean the the 2018 change, did that come from a clause that's been added to 2002 uh the 2002 University Act, or is it from somewhere else? Do you know where that where the-?

[P3]:

It was, it was, it was. It was the, I don't know what's the legal background, but the aim was to rise quality at the university, because we had a lot.

Researcher:

Yeah. But it IS legal then, yeah.

[P3]:

Yeah, we had a LOT of students which were just enrolled, yeah.

Researcher:

Right, yeah.

[P3]:

We had like in English, this sitting back somewhere, just didn't do anything just enrolled and um.

Researcher:

Yeah, kind of INACTIVE ones.

[P3]:

Yeah. Yeah, and then uh. When you when you have, when you have to put in effort before you enroll, you're more likely to continue later on, or it's already a it's one one step more to do, but if you're motivated uh, you you GET in yeah.

Researcher:

Yeah. Yeah. OK.

[P3]:

Nothing you [?].I would say you just have to do which is not possible for anybody. Yeah, you just have to be, the Austrian system is, it's that way, you probably know that you have to find your own supervisor by

yourself.

Researcher:

Yeah.

[P3]:

Uh. It's not given to you by the university, so you have to do your research before and contact the person. But if you do this step, you're already so much willing to study. And if you find someone you are 90% in, if you have a supervisor.

Researcher:

So you think you think it has, it's NOT more restrictive in terms of quality of the candidate, but in terms of the

EFFORT somebody makes that it it, it requires more effort to get in.

[P3]:

Yeah, but if you have to look for supervisor before, yeah. If your quality is not high enough, you won't find the

supervisor.

Researcher:

Right. Of course. Yeah, yeah.

[P3]:

And before before there was a problem that someone got in, then started to look a supervisor and couldn't find someone because for some reason, either the topic was not totally was not nobody was if it was too technical at the [case study university], it's difficult because we have the [university name] [?].

Researcher:

Right, yeah.

[P3]:

Uh, just an example or someone just didn't fit, didn't have the quality, not everybody is is uh able for, his pre

education is not enough for a PhD.

Researcher:

Yeah, and and with the doctoral schools you mentioned that it's kind of, did you say it's kind

of REQUIRED for international cooperation to take place? Is that kind of PRINCIPLE or is that kind of or?

[P3]:

There is we have with the they have to they have to have uh there is a there are contracts with the schools, so 'Errichtungsvertrag'. When they were established, they have the the, the [?] and the [role] [?] have to sign on some rules and some aims and and other governance structure, and ONE of them is international cooperation. So already in the application for the school, they have to either point out already existing cooporations that exist internationally but also some they want to foster or establish, and so they're working on that. And I think even in some way this leads also to more cotutelles.

Researcher:

Right. So that is the a contract between the doctoral school and who, the [case study university] or?

[P3]:

The Rectorate, yes, yeah.

Researcher:

OK. So that would have been, would it have been the RECTORATE that decided this was something that was favorable, I mean? Sorry, what's his name? [Name] is on the in the Rectorate, isn't he the?

[P3]:

Uh [name].

Researcher:

I mean, sorry, I forgot his name, but [name].

[P3]:

[Name]

Researcher:

Oh, [name]. Sorry. I was thinking of [other name] or something ((laughing)).

[P3]:

Yeah ((laughing)).

Researcher:

Sorry. So I mean he's in the Rectorate, isn't he? So?

[P3]:

The [role] [?]

Researcher:

Yeah. Yeah. So um, I mean, the contracts, is it something that would have been decided within

the Rectorate that we're gonna have this push for international?

[P3]:

He was he was very wanted to be very involved within the with the establishing the schools but also there are are [governance role], uh, [name] was also he had to, he was interested in the process and he gave his final final APPROVAL for budget and there is that.

Researcher:

Right. So I mean, has he? Sorry.

[P3]:

But that there's the Rectorate gave a lot of money to it this.

Researcher:

Right, right, right. OK, so um have you noticed any pushback or anyone who's um NOT happy with these developments or is it everyone in favour of these developments?

[P3]:

Uh, yeah, there is, There are some pushbacks. For example, we have the problem that, uh, [subject area], [subject department], [subject faculty], the the largest one is not able to establish a school so far. There are quarrels inside that cannot decide how a school looks and they are in since [#] years, they are in negotiations internally to build up and the reason and since this funding money was from this [scheme] I told you before this money was put into the schools, so each school has a possibility to uh put uh, how to say uh put uh have calls with predoc positions per year? The number depends a little bit on the matching uh matching budget for each successful degree they get a little bit more money. That's a little bit complicated system, but they HAVE money for predoc positions. Since they don't have a school, they do not have this much money for predoc positions, so it's tough for the students there.

Other, students are quite happy with the schools, these who are in schools are happy with the schools, especially because they can, the most of the schools they are also part of some committees. They have a voice, they can speak with and they do. They try to put the give their input to, try to to change something which is not, so they are quite active. So this this aim of the school that it gets more and more exchange and that they're more also potential that the students build it with, this WORKS. A LOT of professors, I I know are not quite happy that the the they weren't quite happy with this [scheme] because it was not on their on their on the, money for funding was not on the faculty level or school level, but it was centralized at the at something “external” ((mimes quotation marks with fingers)). So the [unit name] we did all the all the all the the the PROCESS and even the experts WE took from the faculties could always say we were in this committee OUTSIDE of the faculty, so there were not all these strings and traps and and then you, you know, this academic field can be, it CAN be a minefield mine field. Yeah, and some people always get get the funding, others not, and then. So it was, I would say it was more in-, the DECISION was a lot more independent than it's now again since it's taken in this on this on this level. But there are there are there are some push, push backs or or or to say, uh, they COMPLAIN about this and I can PARTLY understand, understand their point. But it was it it was a strategic decision YEARS ago, so.

Researcher:

Right. Yeah. OK. Um in the in the last development plan that the university presents to the BMBWF um to reach the performance agreement and whatnot, and there's there's quite, ENGLISH, the English language

has become more visible, almost like it's kind of SELLING something, UM in a way like previously, sometimes reference was made to FOREIGN language, that is actually the WORD has actually been replaced with English. So it's it's more ostensibly and more obviously English than before. And also they've made a big thing about these DOCTORAL schools that you're planning for these to be in English and in in the FUTURE as as the the kind of strategic PLAN. Um the people I've talked to have said that a lot of doctoral teaching is ALREADY in English, so they see this more as a kind of MARKETING. But I'm wondering if you have any insight into this that it will increase the the amount of English provision because obviously if you say that there is this requirement for international cooperation CONTRACTUALLY between the doctoral schools and the university, do you think this will result in MORE English?

[P3]:

It's it's that's, that's the that's the aim behind. So also for us and our units, we will our [role] of our unit wants to enforce that that this rectorate wanted to enforce it [name] and we get a new [role] in October, [name], and she's from [subject area] department and already internationally VERY well connected. So I guess she will push to [?] as well. Uhm, WE most as you said, most of the doctoral programmes it is possible to study in English. There are just a few left where you need where German where in German and you will need quite high language skills in German to uh to some of them, [subject area A], for example, that that makes makes sense, of course ((laughing)), and some parts of [subject area B], but also there German is the MAIN working language internationally, so each [subject area expert] at LEAST can read perfectly German in the in as far as I'm aware, and [?] [subject area C], for example, they are a few, there you would need C1 German and you can. So that's quite restricted for it, but the REST is I think it's [#], is this just German, or German on a on a on a higher level.

Researcher:

Yeah. So.

[P3]:

The rest is the rest is possible in English.

Researcher:

So do you think there will be any disadvantage to these subject areas? I mean, except for the obvious ones related to language. For example like you said, [subject area] or or whatever, but the other the other subject areas where they teach in German.

[P3]:

I I think this will change because of the because of the the personell change and the personell gets more international and, I think YES. If you do not offer anything in English on the long run, you will lack the numbers of students. Not in [subject area] of course ((laughing)), but um in the other fields.

Researcher:

Yeah, sure.

[P3]:

Probably, if you won’t[?] as international our university, I guess they will lack numbers. Yeah, I don't have, don't have the the data for it, but it's just my opinion.

Researcher:

Yeah, yeah, sure. Um, do you think that this student capacity is the MAIN consideration? What what are the

other benefits of of, you know, English? Um do you think strategically as well? I mean, because you mentioned the numbers of students, but are there any other strategic benefits to to having things in English, do you think from your experience?

[P3]:

Yeah, it's it's international standard. If you want to get the [case study university], so if you see it from the the biggest picture to get the [case study university] on even MORE international interest in. Our our [role] was talking from a lighthouse of of research, and then you have to be. And UM, I don't know if it works that well in English, as in German with the 'Leuchtturm' ((laughing)).

Researcher:

Can you explain the metaphor to me?

[P3]:

Like the lighthouse.

Researcher:

Sorry, I'm I'm not I'm not I, like the lighthouse connecting the dots ((laughing)).

[P3]:

The lighthouse of of research so that you [?], which the light goes out all over that everybody can see here is great, great, great research and great science that that's the metaphor behind.

Researcher:

And so it's about visibility of the [case study university] on the international stage.

[P3]:

Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, that's that's that's easier that way ((laughing)). But um yes, yes, if you if you you can promote if you if you have it's more it's more services and programs you have in English that's easier you can promote the [case study university] internationally.

Researcher:

And and WHY is it so important to do so um in in your view? I mean from from what you understand of the motivations behind this visibility?

[P3]:

But but I I think the the the, the, the, the, the the reason for the [governance body] is to get higher rankings to get BETTER scientists to be [case study university], like in postdoc phase already in there to make [case study university] MORE attractive for international students because it's if you have a bigger pool, you can choose, it rises, it rises the quality of the of the people you can select. That's the and [city name] IS an attractive city and we have the we have the additional advantage that [city name] and such is a again one of the one of the best city, or the most liveable city in the world. And so it's an attractive city to go. And if THEN the university is attractive and international as WELL, it's uh, it's a uh quid pro quo for [city name] and the [case study university] if you if you can we we can use the the, the, the, the name of [city name] or the attractiveness of [city name] also for, for for the university and mobility is such a important thing for academics, and you have to stay attractive. And if the [case study university] wants to get, wants to get the ranking up when they want to be back under the I think the next aim is top 100 internationality and then getting more attractive for uh scientists all over the world, the way is English.

Researcher:

Yeah, I mean, I guess students from from what you're saying, students are kind of fulfill a dual purpose in that they fulfill the capacity which also I guess is favorite favorable for funding from the BMBWF isn't it, because part-

[P3]:

Yes.

Researcher:

Partly it's based on student numbers, isn't it? And then also in order to attract kind of superstar academics with high profiles?

[P3]:

Hm-hm, yes.

Researcher:

Because if if the course is in English, you also attract the STAFF internationally.

[P3]:

Yeah, of course. Of course. Of course. Here here to, to talk here, about the like to uh, we have some problems still in the in the in the ADMINISTRATION that some some stuff is not offered in English documents for example working contract, or everything in German and that's a HUGE issue and is discussed in the in the HR department and there's not even a there's not even a side letter in English which explains the contract, so this is something where we are lacking/lagging[?] behind an international standard. And we have a LOT of colleagues or service units, which speak REALLY good English and try to help the nationals, but um if you don't have the documents it it's it's hard and it's also hard for the students and the incoming and there, this is a HUGE topic for the next few years and there will be there will happen [?], WE are aware of this thing but here we are like we have HERE we are lacking the internationality.

Researcher:

Right, right. So is there any kind of plans to put a support structure in place to support administrative staff with uh refining or or sorry changing the language of documents and or are you just-?

[P3]:

Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, that's that's the plan. And there, there we have this translation service, but all these, if you have an official document, you know, it's it's a long process because it has to be proved and legally and and and.

Researcher:

Oh, I see. Right. Yeah.

[P3]:

If we we got the the the first administration has this huge uh problem, now that you have SO many tasks, we got this new HR digital system and they are short of people and that's why something like this goes somewhere on the list and yeah, but um we will see if the if the next [governance role] pushes this topic. It's always, I would say, uh uh priority set, how how they put the priority in.

Researcher:

So do you feel it's not prioritized at the moment?

[P3]:

Not, not as much as it SHOULD be.

Researcher:

Because more of the focus-

[P3]:

The focus is more on the on the strategic side, not, they do not see the the red tail, so to say, the bureaucratic red tail, where it all goes. And of course, if you if you offer a contract and the person has a hard time to understand or see what's inside, there are no threat, or but I mean it's strange if you have to put it into [?] and then see what you're signing, yeah ((laughing)).

Researcher:

Yeah, yeah, sure.

[P3]:

I hope that hope that the online online translation is is is is close yeah.

Researcher:

Yeah. I mean, nowadays at least Google Translate allows you to upload the whole document, doesn't it? ((laughing)).

[P3]:

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Researcher:

But it's it's not perfect, is it, the translations. And when it's legal, you have to be very careful, don't you?

[P3]:

Yeah.

Researcher:

OK, I'm I'm wondering because you mentioned mobility as well [redacted identifying information], it kind of reminds me in the the ministry documents, they they make reference to 'Systemziel 4 Förderung des wissenschaftlichen und künstlerischen Nachwuchses' [redacted identifying information].

But it mentions the principles for innovative doctoral training, 2011 and the Salzburg II recommendations umm, which included um 'internationale Netzwerkbildung, zum Beispiel, durch Forschungskooperation, Cotutelle-, oder Joint degree-programme, und Mobilität'. So there seems to be some alignment [redacted identifying information] and this this objective that's formulated in the NATIONAL development plan. So I was wondering if you're aware of any kind of influence coming down from the MINISTERIAL level or if this is something that is not on, I mean, are you more aware of within the university, so the drivers for the-?

[P3]:

Uh, I don't, that's something I cannot totally answer because I don't know how much the ministry pushes on the Rectorate. But MY point of view, it's more internal so it's just, we are such a HUGE university and POWERFUL university in some ways that WE decide what we do. That's MY impression and there is also

this, this university, this conference of university rectors, the UNIKO, THERE they discuss such things that they have how to say one one LINE? They're all the same SIZE when it goes here to the to the, to the ministry and.

Researcher:

So they they kind of present a unified front then with the ministry, so they're-

[P3]:

In SOME topics in some topics they they TRY, yeah, it's ((nodding)).

Researcher:

Yeah, because in the ministry they have this thing where they talk about, you know, the 'Gegenstromprinzip'. So I guess is that then the Rectorate through UNIKO kind of pushing upwards ((laughing)).

[P3]:

Yes, yes, yes, yes, yeah.

Researcher:

Yeah, yeah. OK, great. Umm, the National Development Plan also mentions strength- strengthening networks at the LOCAL level in order to become international players. So, they said 'abgestimmte Standortpolitik mit internationalem Profil' and they talk about umm, 'die Verankerung dieses Systemziels in den universitären Entwicklungsplänen dient somit der Positionierung der Universitäten als internationale Kooperationspartnerinnen mit starkem regionalem Netzwerk'. So I was wondering, obviously you said the the cotutelles are by definition international, but that you ALSO help with you might also help with applications with other sign up joint supervision with another university in Austria. Is that right?

[P3]:

Co-supervision is possible within Austria, yes, so if you can have your your main professor in [city name], you make your PhD in [case study university], you can have a supervisor from [city name A], [city name B], [?], but also but also from external research institutes. There is the the [institution name] uh, near [city name] and the [institution name] also near [city name]. They also offer PhD programmes and there is there is, there are also cooperations there with the [institution name] we have we have some cooperation agreement signed. But I'm I'm not in, I'm not TOTALLY aware of, but um there is, so that's that's some regional cooperation because they are like [#] kilometers from [city name]. But it's close by.

Researcher:

Are are you aware of any kind of when you make these applications or you know collaborate with academic staff or the different structures of the university, are you aware of these kind of REGIONAL cooperations being in service in a way of internationalisation, this is the way it sounds to me in this document is that we're strengthening regional networks but to be strong players on an international stage. Have you come across?

[P3]:

Of course the the the, the, the the, how to say the 'Standort' in German? To strengthen the uh, to strengthen the LOCATION to strengthen the location [city name] as a [city name] and surrounding as a as a as a as a science uh to say hub, yeah.

Researcher:

Right, right.

[P3]:

I don't know. It's it's not totally good in English described right now, but it-

Researcher:

No, no, no. Don't worry.

[P3]:

In German, it's the 'Wissenschaftsstandort'. Yeah, science loc- location.

Researcher:

Right, right. So it's not-

[P3]:

And of course. Of course, if you if you so[?] also in the outskirts of [city], and we have, [city] has also the advantage of it's really close to another [city] there is [city] [#] kilometers away.

Researcher:

Yeah.

[P3]:

And so it's you can really, you can really look on if you strengthen the region, you you make [city] and surrounding internationally more more interesting and for example with [institution name] in [?] or near [?] is really attractive internationally.

Researcher:

Yeah, right. Right.

[P3]:

So they they a lot of good they get a lot of good people get there and then may move to [city] and they live in [city] and work there. And so it's, and they cooporate with [case study university], so it strengthens the area yeah area.

Researcher:

Right, right. But do you think, I mean, I'm not sure about this question, I just thought I'd ask it. Do you

think there's any kind of trickling downwards from the the agenda of say, doctoral provision and the doctoral

school that goes down to master’s level or do you think that the master’s are informed by different strategies in your opinion in relation to internationalization or provision of English language courses? Do you think the umm, the motivations are the same, or are they different or is there some interaction between doctoral and master’s level, or are they seen as different things?

[P3]:

It's quite, WE don't have to do a lot with master’s, um.

Researcher:

Yeah.

[P3]:

[?] admission not much, we have have but um for US master’s, get interesting when they are or we have to do

with master’s when they they started to think about pursuing a further academic CAREER, then we have a lot of master’s students in our information sessions and in our online consulting. Umm, I think, I don't, I don't, I don't, I don't, I'm not aware of the strategy behind there, but I think that's all the internationally, the internationality there, it is important that in, and we got a lot of students from abroad. I think in the in the regular students it's about [?] all of the university is concerned[?] is international and the the the doctoral, it's [#]% so.

Researcher:

Sorry, what was your first, what was your first percentage?

[P3]:

Around [#], around [#], [redacted identifying information] our students are international.

Researcher:

In total.

[P3]:

In total yeah ((nodding)).

Researcher:

And then doctoral level on its own was about [#]%, you said.

[P3]:

((nodding))

And it's it. It's also that's again location [city]. It's attractive for our neighboring countries. We have we have attracted German students of course, but then Czech, Slovak, Hungarians and from the Balkans. It's it's not that far from home, but it's, uh, a attractive city for research and and living.

Researcher:

Yeah, I was just wondering if now with the doctoral schools pushing the English uh agenda that, excuse me, whether the um whether the uh, master’s students, it might put pressure on more master’s courses also to be in English, do you know what I mean, to allow the good, the ones that are?

[P3]:

No. I would have, I would have to have a look on it, but I AM aware there's a lot of masters are being taught in English as well.

Researcher:

Yeah. OK.

[P3]:

But the push, I think the push for English is higher in the in the in the doctorate. So that it means we have the higher number of international [?].

Researcher:

Right, right. Yeah. OK, that's that's so good. Thank you so much. Sorry, I've been asking you lots of questions ((laughing)).

[P3]:

No problem.

Researcher:

Um is there anything else you would like to add or maybe I haven't given you a chance to talk about that you

think is relevant to English language provision or the increase of English language, you know, at doctoral level.

[P3]:

No, the one thing I already mentioned that it would be good that in the [unit] in uh document and then [unit] of the of the of the of the students, English would be MORE presence but otherwise it wouldn't, in the moment, no, I don't know.

Researcher:

Wh- what support with with help that situation? Do you mean like more, you know, hiring more staff or or hiring more staff with high level English skills or providing language?

[P3]:

Yeah BOTH, staff which is more, but this is always in the flow, in two or three years we have a lot of

people go to retirement. Then comes another generation which speaks normally because of his- historic reasons, better English, because English was forced later on in school.

Researcher:

Yeah.

[P3]:

Uh. So this will I think this problem will solve itself, yes.

Researcher:

Oh, I see.

[P3]:

but the document and this stuff, this has to test this to be done from up down, it has to say we need

the documents and they have to be done and they have to be offered[?].

Researcher:

Do you actually, do your staff have the option to take English language courses or?

[P3]:

Yes, yes, yes, uh, we even we even WE at the [unit] offer English courses for PhD candidates. So as focused on on CONVERSATION and then then more academic English. You can the you can DO language courses which are partly for SURE partly paid by the by the university, maybe not ALL, then you have to discuss with your [unit role], and one part is paid by the department and one part is paid by uh human uh development, HR department.

Researcher:

Sorry, but there's nothing that's catered specifically towards YOU. As in, you know, the kind of work that administrative staff need to do at the university that's tailored towards THEM to support THEM in their work.

[P3]:

NOT, not not so far. No, no, I don't, that there is something, I'm not aware of. Yeah, we have a lot of offering for uh for for development, so the HR development does a lot for us and we have a lot of courses we can attend and I'm not aware of specific like service English or something like this. And you always, you always have to be, normally you have to be SELF motivated to do it, there is no, so there's no, there's no, OK, to hold department now goes for [?].

Researcher:

Right. OK, this has been really insightful. Thanks so much.

[P3]:

You're welcome. Thank you. It's interesting.

Researcher:

Thanks so much. Thank you. Again.

[P3]:

Have a nice day and bye.

Researcher:

You too. Thank you. Bye then.